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# TOWN ORGANISATION.

- I.—TOWNS WITHOUT WARDS.  
II.—TOWNS WITH WARDS.
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## NOTES AND HINTS FOR THE GUIDANCE OF LIBERALS.

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PUBLISHED BY  
THE LIBERAL PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT

*(In connection with the National Liberal Federation and the  
Liberal Central Association),*

42, PARLIAMENT STREET, LONDON, S.W.

1896.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

# TOWN ORGANISATION.

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## NOTES AND HINTS FOR THE GUIDANCE OF LIBERALS.

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The object of these notes is to suggest a means whereby every town, whether a separate Parliamentary Borough, or part of a county division, can be thoroughly organised, and placed in charge of earnest Liberals, whose business it will be to take care that Liberal principles are known and understood and that everything which can be done to assist the progress of Liberalism, especially to obtain success at a contested election, shall be carefully and systematically undertaken.

It should be stated at the outset that this pamphlet is not intended to apply in detail to the larger Parliamentary Boroughs, though even in these cases it is hoped useful suggestions may be found in its pages.

The towns to which these notes are applicable may be divided into two classes :—

1. Towns not divided into Wards. This class would include the smaller Municipal Boroughs. In no case would a town in this class have separate Parliamentary representation.

2. Towns divided for Municipal or Local Government purposes into Wards. In some cases these towns would also be Parliamentary Boroughs. In other cases this would not be so, and the Towns would only have a Town or District Council.

It is now proposed to deal with Town Organisation under these two divisions separately in detail.

## I.—TOWNS WITHOUT WARDS.

The organisation should be in the hands of a Liberal Association, called in what follows the Town Liberal Association. Its basis of membership should be as representative as possible, and should include all Liberals who are prepared to give in their adhesion to the Association or contribute money towards its support.

The general scope and function of this Town Liberal Association will be gathered from the following suggested draft rules :—

### RULES OF THE.....LIBERAL ASSOCIATION.

#### OBJECTS.

To secure the support of Electors and Residents in the District, favourable to Liberal principles, who are willing to assist in spreading political information, in securing a complete register of voters, and in returning a Liberal to represent the..... Division in Parliament.

1. The name of the Association shall be "The..... Liberal Association."
2. The Association shall consist of Electors and others who are willing to co-operate in securing the accomplishment of the objects aimed at by the Association.
3. The officers of the Association shall consist of a President, \*Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and Honorary Secretary, to be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association.
4. The General Business of the Association shall be conducted by an Executive Committee, which shall consist of—
  - (1) The officers of the Association.
  - (2) .....Members to be elected by the Association at the Annual Meeting.
5. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a month for the transaction of business. ....to form a quorum.
6. In the event of any vacancy or vacancies occurring in the Officers or Executive Committee during the year of office the Executive Committee shall have power to fill such vacancies by electing any person or persons to act during the remainder of the current year.
7. A General Meeting of the Association (to be known as the Annual Meeting) shall be held annually, not later than February, to receive the Annual Report of the Executive Committee and Financial Statement from the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer respectively; to elect the officers of the Association, and the Executive Committee; and to

\*The number of Vice-Presidents must be settled in each case according to local circumstances.

elect the delegates to the Divisional Liberal Association, to the number allowed by, and in accordance with the rules of that Association.

8. Except in cases of emergency at least five days' notice shall be given of every meeting of the Association, and of the Executive Committee.
9. A Special Meeting of the Association must be convened by the Honorary Secretary at any time on his being requested to do so by a notice signed by not less than 12 members. A Special Meeting of the Executive Committee must in like manner be convened if the Honorary Secretary is requested to do so by a written notice signed by three members of the Executive.
10. The Executive may appoint Sub-Committees for special work at any time. Such Sub-Committees to report to the Executive in accordance with the instructions given to them.
11. Every officer, on ceasing to hold office shall hand over to his successor all books and papers in his possession belonging to the Association.

## THE WORK OF THE TOWN LIBERAL ASSOCIATION.

The work of the Association may be conveniently set forth under the following heads :—

### REGISTRATION.

It will be at once recognised that the greatest practical service which can be rendered to the Liberal cause is to place a Liberal on the register and then to see that when he has the vote he actually uses it. It is accordingly of vital importance to make certain that every qualified Liberal is on the register, and to see that only qualified Tories are allowed to remain there, or to get on.

It must be the unceasing endeavour of the Association to make the Register perfect from a Liberal point of view.

As a general rule it is difficult for Registration work to be properly carried out unless there is a paid staff for the purpose of a house to house canvass. Where this is impossible, the following suggestions will be helpful towards Voluntary effort.

The work of Registration should be carried on by a special Registration Committee, composed of the Executive Committee, together with other members of the Association chosen for their special fitness or aptitude for this particular work. It is particularly desirable that the Registration Committee should include any persons who, from their work or position, have special knowledge of the movements of Voters.

One of the first duties of the Honorary Secretary each year, early in January, must be to obtain two copies of the Parliamentary Register of Voters. This can be procured from the Clerk to the County Council, at the County Hall, or from the Secretary of the Divisional Liberal Association. Where there is a Burgess Roll, that can be obtained from the Town Clerk. The Honorary Secretary must bring the Register to all the meetings of the Registration Committee, which should be held monthly or oftener as required. The members of this Committee should make themselves familiar with the names on the Register. They should make it their business to note changes in the ownership of property and in the occupation of houses, and to seek information about lodgers who may appear entitled to a vote. Information of this kind (which it is most important should be as accurate as possible, especially with regard to dates, and the politics of the persons concerned) ought to be reported at the next meeting of this Committee to the Honorary Secretary, whose duty it will be to keep a record. It is by the help of this record, carefully compiled from month to month, that when the time comes round in July and August, claims and objections will be made on behalf of the Liberal party, and that the Liberal representative in the Revision Courts will be able successfully to appear.\*

If it is at all possible to do so, a systematic house-to-house Registration Canvass or Survey should be made, on the 15th of July in each year, or as nearly as possible thereto. The Registration Canvasser should be supplied with the names of the Voters on the existing Parliamentary Register, written in a book with ample space between each name, so as to note removals and to enter new comers. Registration Canvass books (which contain full instructions as to the work) can be purchased very cheaply from the Liberal Publication Department, 42, Parliament Street, London, S.W. (For price, see p. 3 of Cover.)

On the 20th of June the Overseers publish names of the ownership voters on the existing Register. These names, unless struck out at the Revision Court, subsequently become part of the Register for the following year.

On the 1st of August the Overseers publish the List of Ownership Claimants (which claims must be made on or before the 20th of July) and the List of Occupation Voters, and all Old Lodgers who have

\*It is often possible to avoid the necessity for making claims and objections on behalf of occupiers. If, early in July, before the lists are made up, information is given or sent to the Overseers or Assistant Overseer as to new names which ought to be on the list, and as to old names which have no longer any right to be there.

claimed on or before the 25th of July. (Lodgers must claim every year, but Old Lodgers need not attend the Revision Court unless objected to.)

On the 25th of August the Overseers publish the Lists of Occupation and New Lodger Claims and Objections, and Objections to Ownership Claimants and Voters. It should be noted that the last day for making Occupation and New Lodger Claims and all objections is August 20th.

These Lists should be obtained by the Honorary Secretary as soon as published, either from the Overseers or Assistant Overseer or from the Secretary of the Divisional Liberal Association.

Within a week after each of the above-named underlined dates, special meetings of the Registration Committee (three in all) must necessarily be convened to carefully go through these various lists in the light of the information already in the possession of the Honorary Secretary, and whatever else is suggested by the names in the lists themselves.

Full details of the result of this consideration by the Committee should forthwith be sent (or, where possible, taken) by the Honorary Secretary to the Secretary of the Divisional Liberal Association, to enable the latter to fill up forms of claim and objection.

It is exceedingly desirable that the assistance of the Divisional Liberal Secretary should be secured. He may be able to attend one of these meetings, or to send someone to represent him.

Failing the co-operation of the Secretary of the Divisional Liberal Association, the task of making these claims and objections should be undertaken by the Honorary Secretary himself, or by some other person selected for the purpose by the Registration Committee. A simple Guide to Registration and the necessary forms may be obtained of the Liberal Publication Department, 42, Parliament Street, London, S.W. (For price, see cover p. 3.)

It is assumed that the Out-Voters of the district will be dealt with by the Secretary of the Divisional Liberal Association. In case this is, for any reason, impossible, the Honorary Secretary of the Town Liberal Association might be able to find time to make the necessary inquiries by correspondence.

As far as practical the politics of every Elector should be marked distinctly on one copy of the Register (which should be kept by the Honorary Secretary and regarded as private) in bold capital letters—L for Liberals, and T for Tories and Dissident Liberals, being very careful not to mark any Voter L unless his support can be relied upon. The Doubtfuls should be left blank. This marking should be done early in each year, and be always kept up so that the

Secretary of the Divisional Liberal Association may at any time copy the marks into his own copy of the Register.

### EDUCATIONAL WORK.

It will be for the Executive Committee to consider what educational work can and ought to be carried on, and is best adapted to local circumstances.

There are various ways in which information about Liberal principles can be spread.

### MEETINGS.

Two or three Public Meetings *at least* ought to be held every year for choice during the winter months. These should be arranged so as to cover the various parts of the town. For the larger meetings a speaker or speakers might be obtained with the co-operation of the Secretary of the Divisional Liberal Association.

An Annual Tea and Social Evening is often a very valuable and interesting way of bringing the Members of the Association and their friends together.

Other useful forms of activity worthy of careful consideration are lectures, delivered by Local Liberals, followed by discussion; small meetings at which Liberal principles might be expounded in a conversational way; Magic-lantern Lectures, and occasional Open-air Meetings.

An admirable method of making Liberal principles better understood and appreciated is a Weekly Meeting, at which someone reads an article from some standard Liberal text-book, such for instance as the "Liberal Platform," "The Liberal Magazine," volumes II. and III., "Pamphlets and Leaflets of the Publication Department" (see p. 4 of cover), and the "Financial Reform Almanac." At the conclusion of the reading of the article on the subject under consideration, or even during its progress, discussion would be invited. Sometimes it would be useful to read a speech by a Liberal leader, or a report of the proceedings of Parliament, whilst discussions could be arranged dealing with Bills before Parliament. Care should be taken not to overlook Labour Questions and questions affecting Local Government. The aim should be to make the meetings homely and interesting and as much like a friendly chat as possible. At meetings of this kind it would be well to allow anyone interested to have the opportunity of being present. Indeed, the larger number of outsiders who are present, the more useful would this form of meeting be. Where there is a Liberal Club, meetings of this kind ought certainly to be held.

### LITERATURE.

The Association should arrange for the systematic distribution of Liberal leaflets, dealing with subjects in which the district is interested. These leaflets can be purchased very cheaply from the Liberal Publication Department, 42, Parliament Street, London, S.W. Sample copies of all literature published by this Department will be sent, as issued, to the Honorary Secretary on receipt of his name and address.

Perhaps the most effective way of circulating the literature is every now and again to send a few well-chosen leaflets in an addressed envelope to each elector. The actual delivery of these might well be undertaken by members of the Association.

### ORGANISATION WORK.

We have now arrived at one of the principal objects of the existence of the Association. It is important to Liberalise a neighbourhood by educating it in Liberal principles; it is just as important to see that every qualified Liberal is actually on the Register of Voters. But equally important is it that on the polling day every Liberal shall record his vote. That this may take place the Association must lay its plans on these lines:—

### PREPARATIONS FOR CANVASSING.

Assuming that directly after January 1st the Honorary Secretary has procured two copies of the Register, he should get a set of envelopes addressed from this Register as soon as possible. This set should include all the Parliamentary voters, except those owners of property who do not reside in the district. The work of addressing the envelopes should be arranged for by the Honorary Secretary, assisted by such others as he can enlist for the work. The Honorary Secretary should always have in his possession at least one complete set of addressed envelopes from the current Register.

At a meeting of the Association members should be invited to undertake canvassing work and to give in their names for this purpose to the Honorary Secretary. A special meeting of the Executive Committee should then be held at which the voters of the whole town should be divided up into groups of from 20 to 25, as far as practicable in walking order. The Executive should carefully consider the names of those who have offered to canvass, and to these and any others of whom the Executive may know who would undertake the work each group of voters should be allotted to one given canvasser. Canvass

books should then be prepared, each book containing one group of names. The Executive, together with the canvassers, should constitute a Canvassing Committee, and this Committee should as soon as possible be called together by the Honorary Secretary. The Canvass-books should be produced and considered at this meeting and definite promises should be obtained from members of the Committee to canvass, on the occasion of a contested election, the group of persons whose names are allotted to them. Whilst this is being done it may be found desirable somewhat to re-arrange the names as comprised in the groups. It may be that a group allotted to A contains the names of some electors who could most advantageously be canvassed by B. In such a case these names should be taken from A and given to B. The book would be given to the canvasser, and he would be expected to make himself acquainted with the political leanings of every voter contained therein—in short, he might consider that the 20 or 25 voters were entrusted to his care to obtain as much support as practicable from them at an election contest. Doubtless he would discover opportunities from time to time of discussing politics with the political waverers among them. Immediately a contest occurred he would, after consulting the Honorary Secretary, be expected, without loss of time, personally to call upon, and, on behalf of the Liberal candidate, to canvass the voters committed to his care.

This Canvassing Committee should hold at least two meetings in the year—one of which should be in the month of January, when the old Canvass-books would be replaced by new, compiled from the new register. It will often be found a very desirable plan to allot two canvassers to each group of names, so that the canvassing may be done in pairs. A younger man might, for instance, be associated with an older, and in this way obtain useful experience, valuable alike to himself and the Liberal cause.

Information as to voters who have died, changed their addresses, or left the district, should be noted up by the Canvassers, and supplied by them to the Honorary Secretary, to whom it will be useful for Registration purposes.

The Honorary Secretary must keep a list of Canvassers, with a record of the work allotted to each. This would be done in a Canvass Register (for price, see cover p.3). Any vacancies in the list of Canvassers should be filled up as they occur by the Canvassing Committee, or by the Executive, and the list of Canvassers must be carefully revised and kept complete.

New Canvass-books must be obtained and made out at the beginning of each year. Election Canvass-books can be purchased very cheaply

from the Liberal Publication Department, 42, Parliament Street, London, S.W. (For price, see p. 3 of cover.)

### VEHICLES.

Every one must appreciate the importance of having a sufficient supply of vehicles on the polling day. The Liberal party is confessedly at a disadvantage in this respect, but it has been repeatedly shown after an election that the Liberal party would have been much better off if a list of those likely to lend horses and conveyances had been compiled beforehand, and in this way had been readily available. It should be the duty of the Executive to keep a list of this kind, and this list, when once made out, should come up occasionally for additions and corrections. Horses and vehicles, ordinarily let for hire, are absolutely prohibited by law from being used at Elections.

It should be remembered that many vehicles used by tradesmen and others for business purposes are often well adapted for taking voters to the poll.

### Local Elections.

It is hardly necessary to point out the extreme importance of Town Council, Urban District Council, Guardian, County Council, and School Board Elections. It is by no means necessary that Liberals should take a partisan view of these matters, but it is certainly their duty to see that men are elected to these bodies who will act in a Progressive spirit. Attempts are sometimes made to secure the election of Conservatives, as Conservatives, under the pretence of a non-party fight; especial care should be taken that such attempts are not allowed to succeed.

The suggestions herein contained have been made primarily with a view to Parliamentary contests, but in all cases where the Liberal Association decides to take part in local election, the machinery already outlined should of course be utilised in the interest of the Liberal candidates. For instance, in towns, where municipal contests are decided on party lines, it would be the business of the Town Association to adopt candidates, and to undertake the arrangement of the election campaign.

### Women's Liberal Associations.

Where a Women's Liberal Association exists, it is important to secure its co-operation so that the fullest advantage may be taken of the assistance which it can render, and that combined action should be taken to further the cause of Liberalism. In canvassing, in tracing removals, in the work of registration, in the distribution of literature, and in endless other ways, very valuable help can be rendered by members of Women's Liberal Associations.



## II.—TOWNS WITH WARDS.

In some cases a town in this class would have separate Parliamentary representation. In other cases the town would form part of a Parliamentary County Division.

The general organisation for the town as a whole would be in the hands of the Town Liberal Association, whilst the details would (as explained subsequently) be worked out by Liberal Ward Committees.

The basis of membership of the Town Liberal Association should be as representative as possible, and should include all Liberals who are prepared to give their adhesion to the Association or contribute money towards its support. All members of the Ward Committees would also be members of the Town Association. The general scope and function of the latter will be gathered from the following suggested draft rules.

### RULES OF THE.....LIBERAL ASSOCIATION.

#### OBJECTS.

To secure the support of Electors and Residents in the Borough favourable to Liberal principles, who are willing to assist in spreading political information, in securing a complete register of voters and returning a Liberal to represent.....in Parliament.

- 1 The name of the Association shall be the.....  
Liberal Association.
- 2 The Association shall consist of Electors and others who are willing to co-operate in securing the accomplishments of the objects aimed at by the Association.
- 3 The Officers of the Association shall consist of a President, Vice-Presidents,\* Treasurer and Honorary Secretary to be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association.
- 4 The Business of the Association shall be conducted by the General Committee and the Executive Committee.
- 5 The General Committee (*in Parliamentary Boroughs* the Liberal Two Hundred) shall consist of.....Members,.....  
elected by the.....Liberal Ward Committee (*here set out the number of members for each Ward, according to their respective electorates*), and.....members elected by the Association at its Annual Meeting.

In a Parliamentary Borough these various totals should add up to 200, or such other number as the rules of the Association provide for.

\*The number of Vice-Presidents must be settled in each case according to local circumstances.

6. The Executive Committee shall consist of—

- (1) The Officers of the Association.
- (2) The three Officers of each of the Ward Liberal Committees.
- (3) .....\*Members to be elected by the General Committee (*in towns with separate Parliamentary representation by the Liberal Two Hundred*).  
“Two Hundred” is merely taken as typical. The number would vary according to the size of the town.

7. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a month for the transaction of business. ....to form a quorum.
8. In the event of any vacancy or vacancies occurring in the officers or Executive Committee during the year of office, the Executive Committee shall have power to fill up such vacancies by the election of any other person or persons to act during the remainder of the current year.
9. A General Meeting of the Association (to be known as the Annual Meeting) shall be held annually, not later than February, to receive the Annual Report of the Executive and Financial Statement from the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer respectively; to elect the officers of the Association; to elect ..... additional members of the General Committee (*in Parliamentary Boroughs* the Liberal Two Hundred) as provided for by Rule 5; [and to elect the delegates to the Divisional Liberal Association to the number allowed by and in accordance with the rules of that Association, due regard being had to the claims of the various Wards to be represented proportionately.]

This last sentence would be omitted for towns with separate parliamentary representation.

10. Except in cases of emergency at least five days' notice shall be given of every meeting of the Association Committee, and of the General Committee (*in Parliamentary Boroughs* the Liberal Three Hundred).
11. A special Meeting of the Association or the General Committee (*in Parliamentary Boroughs* the Liberal Two Hundred) must be convened by the Honorary Secretary at any time on his being requested to do so by a notice signed by not less than 25 members. A Special Meeting of the Executive Committee must, in like manner, be convened if the Honorary Secretary is requested to do so by a written notice signed by three members of the Executive.

\*It is suggested that this number might be the same as the total number of Ward Officers.

12. The Executive Committee may appoint Sub-Committees for special work at any time. Such Sub-Committees to report to the Executive in accordance with the instructions given to them.
13. Every officer on ceasing to hold office shall hand over to his successor all books and papers in his possession belonging to the Association.

### **The Work of the Town Liberal Association.**

As will be shown in what follows, the detailed work ought to be carried out by the Ward Liberal Committees, but there are several matters in which the Town Association ought to take the initiative.

#### **REGISTRATION.**

The Town Executive must take care to see that proper arrangements are made everywhere for securing a complete and correct Register. Where paid canvassers for this purpose are necessary, the Town Executive should arrange for their engagement and payment. When there is not a paid agent, the conduct of the Registration—the making out of the claims and objections, and sustaining them in Court—must also be under the supervision of the Executive, or a specially elected Registration Sub-Committee. This would be done in consultation with the Secretary of the Divisional Liberal Association, in the case of towns having no separate Parliamentary representation.

#### **PUBLIC MEETINGS.**

Whilst public Ward meetings would be arranged by the Ward Committees, the larger meetings would be arranged for by the Town Executive, which would also see that in Wards lacking local initiative meetings were arranged and held. Anything in the nature of a demonstration would always be in the hands of the Town Executive.

#### **ORGANISATION.**

Here again it is most important that the Executive should take care to satisfy themselves that the canvassing arrangements in all the Wards are complete and satisfactory. In any case where the Ward Committee for any reason could not arrange enough canvassers from its own members, or in the exceptional case where no Ward Committee exists, the Executive would arrange for adjacent wards to take over the work. In such a case the aim should be that this assistance should be only temporary, and that ultimately the Ward should be worked by its own Ward Committee.

### **LITERATURE.**

The Town Association should supplement Ward efforts in the distribution of literature. The actual work and delivery, or distribution, would, however, often better be done through the Ward organisations.

### **THE SECRETARYSHIP.**

Reference in this pamphlet is always made to the Honorary Secretary of the Town Liberal Association, but it is very desirable, where the town is of sufficient size, that a paid Secretary and Registration Agent should be appointed. His duties would be similar to those of the Honorary Secretary, but he would naturally have more time to devote to making himself thoroughly acquainted with all the thousand and one details connected with the organisation of various Ward Committees, whilst his service at times of registration and election would be particularly valuable.

### **THE LIBERAL TWO HUNDRED.**

The Liberal Two Hundred would exist in Parliamentary Boroughs and would deal with such matters as the selection (on the recommendation of the Executive Committee for final adoption by the Association) of a Parliamentary candidate and with the general direction of Liberal policy in the Borough. It has already been explained that the number two hundred has been taken as typical only. It might be more convenient to have a Liberal 100 or 300. The size of the town and the strength of Liberalism must help in deciding what this number is to be.

### **THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.**

This would exist in towns not having separate Parliamentary representation. The number of its members would vary according to the size of the town and the strength of Liberalism. It would not deal with the choice of a Parliamentary candidate, since this would fall to the Divisional Liberal Association, to which there would be delegates for the town as mentioned in rule 9.

### **WARD COMMITTEES.**

Each Ward should have a Ward Committee, and the idea is to include in these Committees every sympathiser who in any way may be disposed to help forward the Liberal cause. Where local elections are fought on party grounds, the Liberal candidates for the Wards would be chosen by the Ward Committees.

### How to Form a Ward Committee.

In order to establish a Ward Committee, a List of all the known Liberal electors and non-electors in the ward who would be at all likely to take part in promoting Liberalism amongst their neighbours and friends should be compiled. The Honorary Secretary of the Liberal Association of the Town would do this in consultation with the Liberals belonging to the Ward. Otherwise it is suggested that the more active Liberals in the Ward should consult together, and should themselves take the necessary steps.

When this List of Liberals has been made out, the next step is to call them together. This should be done by a circular, something like the following :—

DEAR SIR,

You are cordially invited to be present at a Meeting of Liberals, to be held at....., on....., at.....o'clock, when it is proposed to establish a Liberal Committee for this Ward.

All those who desire the spread of Liberal principles should attend, and we venture to urge upon you the need of active support from all Liberals.

Should you know of any Liberal, who has not been invited by a Circular, we hope you will inform him of the time and place of the meeting and try to bring him with you.

Yours faithfully,

*This Circular should be signed by  
two or more of the best known  
Liberals in the Ward and also by  
the Honorary Secretary of the Town  
Liberal Association.*

### The First Meeting of the Committee.

At the first meeting a temporary Chairman should be elected to conduct the business after this fashion.

1. A Resolution should be submitted and adopted, establishing the Committee. This resolution might be as follows :—

"That those present constitute the Liberal Committee for the ..... Ward, with power to add to their number, and that the object of the Committee be to assist by every legitimate means in their power the advancement of Liberal principles in this Ward."

2. The list of those who have been called to the meeting should now be read over by the temporary Chairman, in order that any friends who have been accidentally left out may be invited to join the Committee, and that the names of any included by mistake may be struck out.

It is suggested that before the next meeting the Officers of the Committee should obtain two copies of the most recently issued list of voters. It could doubtless be obtained from, or through, the Honorary Secretary of the Town Liberal Association. These lists of Voters will enable the Committee at its next meeting to make certain that no Elector has been overlooked in forming the Committee.

The Committee may now be considered established, and the first duty is, therefore, the appointment of a Chairman, a Treasurer and an Honorary Secretary, and the selection of four other persons to form with the officers the Executive of the Committee.

The duties attaching to the various offices may briefly be summed up as follows :—

#### (a) Chairman.

To preside at the meetings of the Ward Committee.

To be responsible together with his fellow-officers for calling meetings of the Committee and of the Ward Executive as often as the Officers, the Executive or the Liberal Association think desirable—for instance, in connection with registration or as may hereafter appear necessary and desirable.

To be responsible, together with his fellow-officers, for seeing personally that the decisions of the Committee are duly carried out.

#### (b) Treasurer.

To receive subscriptions from such Liberals as are willing to subscribe.

To endeavour to raise sufficient money for the purposes of the Ward.

It would be the duty of the Treasurer of the Town Liberal Association to raise the money required for the town as a whole. The money necessary for Ward purposes would generally be very small.

To report quarterly on the state of the finances and to submit a yearly statement of accounts to the Annual Meeting of the Committee.

#### (c) Honorary Secretary.

To take whatever steps are necessary for calling the Ward Committee and Ward Executive together.

To act as clerk to the Committee and Executive and to take care that arrangements are made for the carrying out of all the necessary work of the Committee and Executive.

To keep the minutes of the meetings of the Committee and Executive and, with the officers, to prepare the agenda for each meeting.

To draw up, in consultation with the Executive, a draft report of the work done during the year to be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Committee.

To plan and superintend the canvass arrangements, as explained subsequently.

To be in touch with the Town Liberal Association, and constantly to inform its Secretary of whatever steps are being taken in his district. This report to the Town Liberal Association should be made at least quarterly.

(d) *Executive.*

To act as a consultative body initiating action, and generally supervising the work of the Ward Committee.

It will be seen that in the suggested Rules of the Town Liberal Association (see p. 10) that the Ward Executives together form the Executive Committee of the Town Liberal Association, together with other persons, as are provided for by the Rules of that Association.

4. Rules for the conduct of the proceedings and for the satisfactory working of the Committee should now be considered and adopted. Those given below, if not entirely applicable in every case, will probably be found to furnish a satisfactory basis.

# RULES OF THE.....WARD LIBERAL COMMITTEE.

## OBJECTS.

To secure the support of Electors and Residents in the Ward favourable to Liberal principles, who are willing to assist in spreading political information, in securing a complete register of voters, and in returning a Liberal to represent the.....("Borough" or "Division" as the case may be) in Parliament.

1. The name of the Committee shall be "The..... Ward Liberal Committee."
2. The Committee shall consist of Electors and others who are willing to co-operate in securing the accomplishment of the objects aimed at by the Committee.
3. Not less than six meetings of the Committee shall be held in each year. The Executive shall meet at least once a month.

4. Except in cases of emergency, at least five days' notice shall be given of every meeting of the Ward Committee.
5. Minutes of the Committee's proceedings shall be kept by the Honorary Secretary, and shall be read and confirmed at each succeeding meeting.
6. The Committee at its Annual Meeting, to be held not later than February in each year, shall receive an audited Treasurer's Account, together with a statement of business done by the Committee during the year, elect the Chairman, Treasurer, Honorary Secretary and four other members to form, with the officers, the Executive for the ensuing year and the delegates to the General Committee (*in Parliamentary Boroughs* the Liberal Two Hundred) in accordance with the rules of that Association.
7. A Special Meeting of the Committee must be convened by the Honorary Secretary at any time, on his being requested to do so by a notice signed by not less than twelve Members of the Committee.
8. Every Officer on ceasing to hold office shall hand over to his successor all books and papers in his possession belonging to the Committee.

There is considerable advantage in the rules being printed, and the Honorary Secretary should see that each member of the Committee is provided with a copy as soon as possible.

## Subsequent Meetings.

It is suggested that before the first meeting separates, arrangements should be made for another meeting, at an early date, of the full Committee, as now formed, that is including any members added at this first meeting. At this and subsequent meetings the work of the Committee, as explained in detail on succeeding pages, would be carried on. It is very advisable that a meeting of the Ward Committee should be held at least six times in the year, and of the Executive Committee once a month, if possible on a fixed day in the month, such, for instance, as the first Monday. Exceptions to this will suggest themselves. It may be found necessary for instance, to suspend or alter the date during summer months, except in so far as Registration is concerned.

## THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE.

The work of the Committee may be conveniently set forth under the following heads :—

### Registration.

It will be at once recognised that the greatest practical service which can be rendered to the Liberal cause is to place a Liberal on the register and then to see that when he has the vote he actually uses it. It is accordingly of vital importance to make certain that every qualified Liberal is on the register, and to see that only qualified Tories are allowed to remain there, or to get on.

It must be the unceasing endeavour of the Committee to make the register perfect from a Liberal point of view.

As a general rule it is difficult for the Registration to be properly carried out unless there is a paid staff for the purpose of a house to house canvass. Where this is impossible, the following suggestion will be helpful towards voluntary effort.

One of the first duties of the Honorary Secretary each year, early in January, must be to obtain two copies of the Parliamentary Register of Voters. This can be procured from the Town Clerk, the Clerk to the County Council, or, better still, from the Honorary Secretary of the Town Divisional Liberal Association. Where there is a Burgess Roll, that can be obtained from the Town Clerk. The Honorary Secretary must bring the Register to every meeting of the Committee. The members of the Committee should make themselves familiar with the names on the Register. They should make it their business to note any change in the occupation of houses, and (especially in towns which are not separate Parliamentary Boroughs), in the ownership of property, and to seek information about lodgers who may appear entitled to a vote. Intelligence of this kind (which it is most important should be as accurate as possible, especially with regard to dates, and the politics of the persons concerned) ought to be reported at the next meeting of the Committee to the Honorary Secretary, whose duty it will be to keep a record for the information and use of the Liberal Registration Agent.

On the 20th of June the Overseers publish the ownership part of the Register, which will come in force the following year.

On the 1st of August the Overseers publish the List of Ownership Claimants (which claims must be made on or before the 20th of July) and the List of Occupation Voters, and all Old Lodgers who have claimed on or before the 25th of July. (Lodgers must claim every year, but Old Lodgers need not attend the Revision Court, unless objected to)

On the 25th of August the Overseers publish the Lists of Occupation and New Lodger Claims and Objections, and Objections to Ownership Voters and Claimants. (It should be noted that the last day for making Occupation and New Lodger Claims, and all objections, is August 20th.)

These Lists should be obtained by the Honorary Secretary as soon as published, either from the Secretary of the Town or Divisional Liberal Association, or from the Overseers or Assistant-Overseer.

Within a week after August the 1st and August the 25th special meetings of the Committee must necessarily be convened carefully to go through these various lists in the light of the information already in the possession of the Honorary Secretary, and whatever else is suggested by the names in the lists themselves. In the case of towns which have no separate representation, but are parts of a County Division, it will be necessary to meet within a week of June the 20th to consider the Ownership List.

Full details of the result of this consideration by the Committee should forthwith be communicated by the Honorary Secretary to the Secretary of the Town Liberal Association.

It is exceedingly desirable that the attendance of the Liberal Registration Agent should be secured for one *at least* of these meetings, preferably for the meeting held after August the 1st. This should be arranged for by the Honorary Secretary in consultation with the Secretary of the Town Liberal Association. It will be the business of this Registration Agent to make the necessary arrangements for filling up the Forms of Claim and Objection. A simple Guide to Registration and the necessary forms may be obtained of the Liberal Publication Department, 42, Parliament Street, London, S.W. (For price, see cover, p. 3.)

As far as practicable the politics of every Elector should be marked distinctly on one copy of the Register (which should be kept by the Honorary Secretary and regarded as private) in bold capital letters

—L for Liberals, and T for Tories and Dissident Liberals, being very careful not to mark any Voter L unless his support can be relied upon. The Doubtfuls should be left blank. This marking should be done early in each year, and be always kept up so that the Liberal Registration Agent or the Secretary of the Town Liberal Association may at any time copy the marks into his own copy of the Register.

### Educational Work.

It will be for the Committee to consider what educational work can and ought to be carried on, and is best adapted to local circumstances.

There are various ways in which information about Liberal principles can be spread.

### MEETINGS.

Apart from Meetings for the Town as a whole (which would be organised by the Town Liberal Association) at least one Public Meeting ought to be held every year in each Ward, during the winter months. For this, if needful, a speaker or speakers might be obtained with the help of the Secretary of the Town Liberal Association.

Other useful forms of activity worthy of careful consideration are addresses at the Committee Meetings, to be delivered by members of the Committee, followed by discussion, Magic Lantern Lectures, and an occasional Open Air Meeting. An annual Ward Tea and Social Evening for members and friends is often a very useful form of meeting.

An admirable method of making Liberal principles better understood and appreciated is a Weekly Meeting, at which one of the members reads an article from some standard Liberal text-book, such for instance as the "Liberal Platform," "The Liberal Magazine," volumes II. and III., "Pamphlets and Leaflets of the Publication Department" (see p. 4 of cover), and "The Financial Reform Almanac." The Member of the Committee would act as a Reader, and at the conclusion of the reading of the article on the subject under consideration, or even during its progress, discussion would be invited. Sometimes it would be useful to read a speech by a Liberal

leader, or a report of the proceedings of Parliament, whilst discussions could be arranged dealing with Bills before Parliament. Care should be taken not to overlook Labour questions, and questions affecting Local Government. The aim of the Committee should be to make the meetings homely and interesting, and as much like a friendly chat as possible. At meetings of this kind it would be well to allow anyone interested to have the opportunity of being present. Indeed, the larger number of outsiders who are present, the more useful would this form of meeting be. Where there is a Liberal Club, meetings of this kind ought certainly to be held.

### LITERATURE.

The Committee should arrange for the systematic distribution of Liberal leaflets, dealing with subjects in which the district is interested. These leaflets could generally be obtained from the Secretary of the Town Liberal Association, or can be purchased very cheaply from the Liberal Publication Department, 42, Parliament Street, London, S.W. Sample copies of all literature published by this Department may be obtained, as issued, by the Honorary Secretary on receipt of his name and address.

Perhaps the most effective way of circulating the literature is every now and again to send a few well-chosen leaflets in an addressed envelope to each elector. The actual delivery of these might well be undertaken by members of the Committee.

### Organisation Work.

We have now arrived at one of the principal objects of the existence of the Committee. It is important to Liberalise a neighbourhood by educating it in Liberal principles; it is just as important to see that every qualified Liberal is actually on the Register of Voters. But equally important is it that on the polling day every Liberal shall record his vote. That this may take place, the Committee must lay its plans on these lines:—

### PREPARATIONS FOR CANVASSING.

Assuming that directly after January 1st the Honorary Secretary has procured two copies of the Register for the Ward dealt with by the Committee, he should get a set of envelopes addressed from this Register as soon as possible. This set should include all the

Parliamentary voters, except the owners of property who do not reside in the district. In Parliamentary Borough Lists there would be no owners. The work of addressing the envelopes should be undertaken by the Honorary Secretary, assisted by such other persons as he can enlist for the work. The Honorary Secretary should always have in his possession one complete set of addressed envelopes from the current Register.

The Executive should also arrange for the preparation of canvass books, containing from 20 to 25 names each, and comprising the entire electorate of the Ward. This should be done, as far as practicable, in walking order.

These books should be produced at the next meeting of the Committee, and promises should be obtained from members of the Committee to canvass, on the occasion of a contested election, the group of persons whose names are allotted to them. Whilst this is being done, it may be found desirable somewhat to rearrange the names as comprised in the groups. It may be that a group allotted to A contains the names of some electors who could most advantageously be canvassed by B. In such a case these names should be taken from A and given to B.

The book would be given to the canvasser, and he would be expected to make himself acquainted with the political leanings of every voter contained therein—in short, he might consider that the twenty or twenty-five voters were entrusted to his care to obtain as much support as practicable from them at an election contest. Doubtless he would discover opportunities from time to time of discussing politics with the political waverers among them. Immediately a contest occurred he would, after consulting the Honorary Secretary, be expected, without loss of time, personally to call upon, and, on behalf of the Liberal Candidate, to canvass the voters committed to his care.

At least two Special Meetings should be held every year, to which the Officers, Executive and Canvassers should be summoned. At these meetings (at one of which, early in the year, new canvass books must be given to replace the old ones) the whole question of the canvassing arrangements should be carefully gone into.

Information as to voters who have died, changed their addresses, or left the district, should be noted up by the Canvassers, and supplied by them to the Honorary Secretary, to whom it will be useful for Registration purposes.

The Honorary Secretary must keep a list of Canvassers, with a record of the work allotted to each. This would be done in a Canvass Register (for price see cover p. 3). It would also be very desirable that he should have a spare set of canvass books, with the voters' names entered therein, corresponding to those given to the canvassers.

New canvass books must be obtained and made out from the new register, at the beginning of each year, and the list of canvassers should be carefully revised and kept complete. Election Canvass books should be obtained from the Secretary of the Town Liberal Association, or failing that, can be purchased very cheaply from the Liberal Publication Department, 42, Parliament Street, London, S.W. (For price, see cover, p. 3.)

## VEHICLES.

Every one must appreciate the importance of having a sufficient supply of vehicles on the polling day. The Liberal party is confessedly at a great disadvantage in this respect, but it has been repeatedly shown after an election that the Liberal party would have been much better off if a list of those likely to lend horses and conveyances had been compiled beforehand, and in this way had been readily available. It should be the duty of the Committee to keep a list of this kind, and this list, when once made out, should come up occasionally for additions and corrections. Horses and vehicles, ordinarily let for hire, are absolutely prohibited by law from being used at Elections.

It should be remembered that many vehicles used by tradesmen and others for business purposes are often well adapted for taking voters to the poll.

## Local Elections.

It is hardly necessary to point out the extreme importance of Town Council, District Council, Guardian, County Council, and School Board Elections. It is by no means necessary that Liberals should take a partisan view of these matters, but it is certainly their duty to see that men are elected to these bodies who will act in a Progressive spirit. Attempts are sometimes made to secure the election of Conservatives, as Conservatives, under the pretence of a non-party fight; especial care should be taken that such attempts are not allowed to succeed.



The foregoing suggestions have been made primarily with a view to Parliamentary contests, but in all cases where the Liberal Association decides to take part in local elections, the machinery already outlined should of course be utilised in the interest of the Liberal candidates. For instance, in towns, where municipal contests are decided on party lines, it would be the business of the Ward Committee to adopt candidates, and to undertake the arrangement of the election campaign.

### Women's Liberal Associations.

Where a Women's Liberal Association exists, it is very important to secure its co-operation so that the fullest advantage may be taken of the assistance which it can render, and that combined action should be taken to further the cause of Liberalism. In canvassing, in tracing removals, in the work of registration, in the distribution of literature, and in endless other ways, very valuable help can be rendered by members of Women's Liberal Associations.

## ORGANISATION AND REGISTRATION FORMS, &c.

### Canvass Books. (See p. II.)

(In Ordering please state whether Election or Registration Canvass Books are required.)

6 for	8d.	} post free.
12 „	1s. 0d.	
25 „	1s. 9d.	

### Canvass Register. (See p. II.)

Price 1s.; *post free*, 1s. 2d.

A larger size, price, 2s. 6d.; *post free*, 2s. 9d.

### Borough Registration:—Notes and Hints for the Guidance of Liberals.

Price, 1d.; *post free*, 1½d.

### County Registration:—Notes and Hints for the Guidance of Liberals.

Price, 1d.; *post free*, 1½d.

### Village Organisation:—Notes and Hints for the Guidance of Liberals.

Price, 1d.; *post free*, 1½d.

### Prices for quantities of Organisation and Registration Pamphlets.

12 copies	10d.	<i>post free</i> , 1s. 0d.
25 „	1s. 6d.	„ 2s. 0d.
50 „	2s. 9d.	„ 3s. 6d.
100 „	5s. 0d.	„ 6s. 3d.

### Organisation and Registration.—Being the series of four Pamphlets on Town and County Organisation and Registration, bound up in one volume.

Price, 3d.; *post free*, 4d.

### Registration Forms.

A Complete List, with prices, may be had on application.

*All the above, with a complete catalogue of the Department's  
other publications, may be obtained from the*

**LIBERAL PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT,**

42, Parliament Street, London, S.W.



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## ORGANISATION AND REGISTRATION FORMS, &c.

### Canvass Books. (See p. 11.)

(In Ordering please state whether Election or Registration Canvass Books are required.)

6	for	8d.	} post free.
12	„	1s. 0d.	
25	„	1s. 9d.	

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25	„	1s. 6d.;	„ 2s. 0d.
50	„	2s. 9d.;	„ 3s. 6d.
100	„	5s. 0d.;	„ 6s. 3d.

### Organisation and Registration.—Being the series of four Pamphlets on Town and County Organisation and Registration, bound up in one volume.

Price, 3d.; post free, 4d.

### Registration Forms.

A Complete List, with prices, may be had on application.

All the above, with a complete catalogue of the Department's  
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